

# The DIM LANTERN

By TEMPLE BAILEY

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CHAPTER X—Continued  
—15—

Adelaide sat motionless, eyes on her plate. When she spoke again it was of other things. "Did you hear that Delafield is coming back?" "Who told you?" asked Frederick. "Eloise Harper. Benny's sister saw Del at Miami. She is sure he is expecting to marry the other girl."

"Bad taste, I call it." "Everybody is crazy to know who she is."

"Have they any idea?" "No. Benny's sister said he talked quite frankly about getting married. But he wouldn't say a word about the woman."

"I hardly think he will find Edith heart-broken." Towne glanced across the table. Edith was not wearing the willow. No shadow marred her lovely countenance. Her eyes were clear and shining pools of sweet content.

Her uncle was proud of that high-held head. He and Edith might not always hit it off. But, by Jove, he was proud of her.

"No, she's not heart-broken," Adelaide's cool tone disturbed his reflections, "she is getting her heart mended."

"What do you mean?" "They are an attractive pair, little Jane and her brother. And the boy has lost his head."

"Over Edith? Oh, well, she plays around with him; there's nothing serious in it."

"Don't be too sure. She's interested."

"What makes you insist on that?" irritably.

"I know the signs, dear man," the cat seemed to purr, but she had claws.

And it was Adelaide who was right. Edith had come to the knowledge that night of what Baldy meant to her.

As she had entered the ballroom men had crowded around her. "Why," they demanded, "do you wear mistletoe, if you don't want to pay the forfeit?"

Backed up against one of the marble pillars, she held them off. "I do want to pay it, but not any of you."

Her frankness diverted them. "Who is the lucky man?"

"He is here. But he doesn't know he is lucky."

They thought she was joking. But she was not. And on the other side of the marble pillar a page in scarlet listened, with joy and fear in his heart. "How fast we are going. How fast."

There was dancing until midnight, then the curtains at the end of the room were drawn back, and the tree was revealed. It towered to the ceiling, a glittering, gorgeous thing. It was weighted with gifts for everybody, fantastic toys most of them, expensive, meaningless.

Evans, standing back of the crowd, was aware of the emptiness of it all. Oh, what had there been throughout the evening to make him think of the Babe who had been born at Bethlehem?

The gifts of the Wise Men? Perhaps. Gold and frankincense and myrrh? One must not judge too narrowly. It was hard to keep simplicities in these opulent days.

Yet he was heavy-hearted, and when Eloise Harper charged up to him, dressed somewhat scantly as a dryad, and handed him a foolish monkey on a stick, she seemed to suggest a heathen saturnalia rather than anything Christian and civilized.

"A monkey for a monk," said Eloise. "Mr. Follette, your cassock is frightfully becoming. But you know you are a whitened sepulchre."

"Am I?" "Of course. I'll bet you never say your prayers."

She danced away, unconscious that her words had pierced him. What reason had she to think that any of this meant more to him than it did to her? Had he borne witness to the faith that was within him? And was it within him? And if not, why?

He stood there with his foolish monkey on his stick, while around him whirled a laughing, shrieking crowd. Why, the thing was a carnival, not a sacred celebration. Was there no way in which he might bear witness?

Edith had asked him to sing the old ballads, "Dame, get up and bake your pies," and "I saw three ships a-sailing." Evans was in no mood for the dame who baked her pies on Christmas day in the morning, or the pretty girls who whistled and sang—on Christmas day in the morning.

When all the gifts had been distributed the lights in the room were turned out. The only illumination was the golden effulgence which encircled the tree.

In his monk's robe, within that circle of light, Evans seemed a mystical figure. He seemed, too, appropriately ascetic, with his gray hair, the weary lines of his old-young face.

But his voice was fresh and clear.

And the song he sang hushed the great room into silence.

"O little town of Bethlehem, How still we see thee lie, Above thy deep and dreamless sleep,

The silent stars go by; Yet in thy dark streets shineth, The everlasting light, The hopes and fears of all the years Are met in thee tonight."

He sang as if he were alone in some vast arched space, beneath spires that reached towards Heaven, behind some grille that separated him from the world.

And now it seemed to him that he sang not to that crowd of upturned faces, not to those men and women in shining silks and satins, not to Jane who was far away, but to those others who pressed close—his comrades across the Great Divide!

So he had sung to them in the hospital, sitting up in his narrow



"And—I told him he must not, Miss Towne."

bed—and most of the men who had listened were—gone.

As the last words rang out his audience seemed to wake with a sigh.

Then the lights went up. But the monk had vanished!

Evans left word with Baldy that he would go home on the trolley. "I am not quite up to the supper and all that. Will you look after Mother?"

"Of course. Say, Evans, that song was top notch. Edith wants you to sing another."

"Will you tell her I can't? I'm sorry. But the last time I sang that was for the fellows—in France. And it—got me—"

"It got me, too," Baldy confided; "made all this seem—silly."

It was just before New Year's that Lucy Logan brought a letter for Frederick Towne to sign, and when he had finished she said, "Mr. Towne, I'm sorry, but I'm not going to work any more. So will you please accept my resignation?"

He showed her surprise. "What's the matter? Aren't we good enough for you?"

"It isn't that." She stopped and went on, "I'm going to be married, Mr. Towne."

"Married?" He was at once congratulatory. "That's a pleasant thing for you, and I mustn't spoil it by telling you how hard it is going to be to find someone to take your place."

"I think if you will have Miss Dale? She's really very good."

Frederick was curious. What kind of lover had won this quiet Lucy? Probably some clerk or salesman. "What about the man? Nice fellow, I hope—"

"Very nice, Mr. Towne," she flushed, and her manner seemed to forbid further questioning. She went away, and he gave orders to the cashier to see that she had an increase in the amount of her final check. "She will need some pretty things. And when we learn the date we can give her a present."

So on Saturday night Lucy left, and on the following Monday a card was brought up to Edith Towne.

She read it. "Lucy Logan? I don't believe I know her," she said to the maid.

"She says she is from Mr. Towne's office, and that it is important."

"Miss Towne," Lucy said as Edith approached her, "I have resigned from your uncle's office. Did he tell you?"

"No. Uncle Fred rarely speaks about business."

With characteristic straightforwardness Lucy came at once to the point. "I have something I must talk over with you. I don't know whether I am doing the wise thing. But it is the only honest thing."

"I can't imagine what you can have to say."

"No you can't. It's this—" she hesitated, then spoke with an effort. "I am the girl Mr. Simms is in love with. He wants to come back and marry me."

Edith's fingers caught at the arm of the chair. "Do you mean that it was because of you—that he didn't marry me?"

"Yes. He used to come to the office when he was in Washington and dictate letters. And we got in the way of talking to each other. He seemed to enjoy it, and he wasn't like some men—who are just—silly. And I began to think about him a lot. But I didn't let him see it. And— he told me afterward, he was always thinking of me. And the morning of your wedding day he came down to the office—to say 'Good-by.' He said he—just had to. And—well, he let it out that he loved me, and didn't want to marry you. But he said he would have to go on with it. And—and I told him he must not, Miss Towne."

Edith stared at her. "Do you mean that what he did was your fault?"

"Yes," Lucy's face was white, "if you want to put it that way. I told him he hadn't any right to marry you if he loved me." She hesitated, then lifted her eyes to Edith's with a glance of appeal. "Miss Towne, I wonder if you are big enough to believe that it was just because I cared so much—and not because of his money?"

"You think you love him?" she demanded.

"I know I do. And you don't. You never have. And he didn't love you. Why—if he should lose every cent tomorrow, and I had to tramp the road with him, I'd do it gladly. And you wouldn't. You wouldn't want him unless he could give you everything you have now, would you? Would you, Miss Towne?"

Edith's sense of justice dictated her answer. "No," she found herself unexpectedly admitting. "If I had to tramp the roads with him, I'd be bored to death."

"I think he knew that, Miss Towne. He told me that if he didn't marry you, your heart wouldn't be broken. That it would just hurt your pride."

Edith had a moment of hysterical mirth. How they had talked her over. Her lover—and her uncle's stenographer! What a tragedy it had been! And what a comedy!

She leaned forward a little, locking her fingers about her knees. "I wish you'd tell me all about it."

So Lucy told the simple story. And in telling it showed herself so naive, so steadfast, that Edith was aware of an increasing respect for the woman who had taken her place in the heart of her lover. She perceived that Lucy had come to this interview in no spirit of triumph. She had dreaded it, but had felt it her duty. "I thought it would be easier for you if you knew it before other people did."

Edith's forehead was knitted in a slight frown. "The whole thing has been most unpleasant," she said. "When are you going to marry him?"

"I told him on St. Valentine's day. It seemed—romantic."

Romance and Del! Edith had a sudden illumination. Why, this was what he had wanted, and she had given him none of it! She had laughed at him—been his good comrade. Little Lucy adored him—and had set St. Valentine's day for the wedding!

There was nothing small about Edith Towne. She knew fineness when she saw it, and she had a feeling of humility in the presence of little Lucy. "I think it was my

fault as much as Del's," she stated. "I should never have said 'Yes.' People haven't any right to marry who feel as we did."

"Oh," Lucy said rapturously, "how dear of you to say that. Miss Towne, I always knew you were—big. But I didn't dream you were so beautiful." Tears wet her cheeks. "You're just—marvellous," she said, wiping them away.

"No, I'm not." Edith's eyes were on the fire. "Normally, I am rather proud and—hateful. If you had come a week ago—" Her voice fell away into silence as she still stared at the fire.

Lucy looked at her curiously. "A week ago?"

Edith nodded. "Do you like fairy tales? Well, once there was a princess. And a page came and sang—under her window." The fire purred and crackled. "And the princess—liked the song—"

"Oh," said Lucy, under her breath.

She stood up. "I can't tell you how thankful I am that I came."

"You're not going to run away yet," Edith told her. "I want you to have lunch with me. Upstairs. You must tell me all your plans."

"It hasn't many. And I really oughtn't to stay."

"Why not? I want you. Please don't say no."

So up they went, with the perturbed parlor maid speaking through the tube to the pantry. "Miss Towne wants luncheon for two, Mr. Waldron. In her room. Something nice, she says, and plenty of it."

Little Lucy had never seen such a room as the one to which Edith led her. The whole house was, indeed, a dream palace. Yet it was the atmosphere with which her lover would soon surround her. She had a feeling almost of panic. What would she do with a maid like Alice, who was helping Josephine set up the folding-table, spread the snowy cloth, bring in the hot silver dishes?

As if Edith divined her thought, she said when the maids had left, "Lucy, will you let me advise?"

"Of course, Miss Towne."

"Don't try to be—like the rest of us. Like Del's own crowd, I mean. He fell in love with you because you were different. He will want you to stay—different."

"But I shall have so much to learn."

Edith was impatient. "What must you learn? External? Let them alone. Be yourself. You have dignity—and strength. It was the strength in you that won Del. You and he can have a life together that will mean a great deal, if you will make him go your way. But you must not go his—"

Lucy considered that. "You mean that the crowd he is with weakens him?"

"I mean just that. They're sophisticated beyond words. You're what they would call—provincial. Oh, be provincial, Lucy. Don't be afraid. But don't adopt their ways. You go to church, don't you? Say your prayers? Believe that God's in His world?"

Lucy's fair cheeks were flushed. "Why, of course I do."

"Well, we don't—not many of us," said Edith. "The thing you have got to do is to interest Del in something. Don't just go sailing away with him in his yacht. Buy a farm over in Virginia, and help him make a success of it."

"But he lives in New York."

"Of course he does. But he can live anywhere. He's so rich that he doesn't have to earn anything, and his office is just a fiction. You must make him work. Go in for a fad; blooded horses, cows, black Berks—"

(TO BE CONTINUED)



On the Funny Side

CONFIDENCE

Two gentlemen sat in their hotel room, consuming a quart of spirits. One of them had an idea, and raised the window. "I am going to take off and fly around the courtyard a little bit," he remarked.

Leaping from the window sill, he buried his nose in the cement three floors below. The next day his friend went to the hospital to see him.

"I certainly made a fool of myself yesterday," said the patient. "Why didn't you stop me?"

"Well, shucks," said his friend, "maybe I should have, but I really thought you could do it."

JUST WASTING TIME



Ida—You'd never get me to waste hours sitting on a sofa with any man!

Irene—I suppose it is just waist-ing-time.

That Umbrella They were discussing the excursions into literature of famous statesmen.

"Has Mr. Chamberlain ever written a book?" asked the teacher.

"Yes, sir," piped the bright boy of the class. "'Mein Gamp!'"

No Help at All "Could you let me have—er—a banker's reference, sir?" said the house-agent, negotiating a sale.

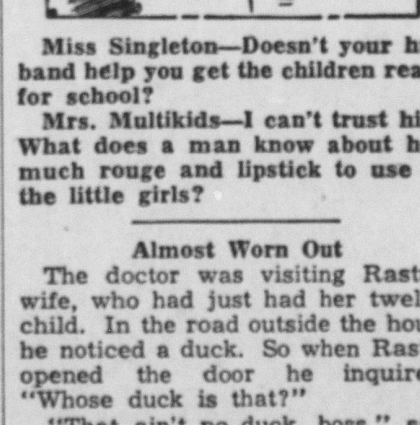
"Just a formality, you know."

"I could," replied the client, "but it would only distress you."

Polite Suggestion Diner—I say, waiter, I have only one quarter. What would you suggest?

Waiter—Another restaurant, sir!

A WOMAN'S JOB



Miss Singleton—Doesn't your husband help you get the children ready for school?

Mrs. Multikids—I can't trust him. What does a man know about how much rouge and lipstick to use on the little girls?

Almost Worn Out The doctor was visiting Rastus' wife, who had just had her twelfth child. In the road outside the house he noticed a duck. So when Rastus opened the door he inquired:

"Whose duck is that?"

"That ain't no duck, boss," said Rastus. "That's the stork with its legs worn down."

Free Wheeling Cycle Sandy entered the shop where he had recently purchased a bicycle.

"It's about the bike, mon," he said.

"Hasn't it arrived yet?" said the shopkeeper.

"It has," said Sandy, "but where's that free wheel you spoke about?"

Soaring Prices Ardent Reader—I wonder what became of the dime novel? Literary Critic—They're selling it for \$3 now.

General Utility Mose—I'm sho' glad my wife's built long and thin like a shoestring.

Rastus—Why fo? Mose—Well, she doesn't shade the corn when she's hoein' it like a fat woman would!

Very Rough Tom—Was her father rough with you when you told him you had secretly married his daughter? Dick—I'll say. He nearly shook my arm off.

Child Would Love These Dutch Dolls



Pattern 6475

Dolls are always fun to sew. When they work up as quickly as these (they're two pieces with a band to round the head) you'll want to keep on making them. Pattern 6475 contains a pattern and directions for making the dolls and their clothes; materials needed.

To obtain this pattern send 15 cents in coins to The Sewing Circle, Household Arts Dept., 249 W. 14th St., New York, N. Y.

Bag Was Positively Golfer's Last Chance

The fat man decided to try golf. Armed with six golf clubs, a ball, and a caddie, he marched off to the links.

The caddie placed the ball on the tee. Then, with a terrific swing, the fat man whirled his club through the air. But the little white ball remained on its tee, while the club, meeting mother earth, broke into splinters.

The second, third, fourth, and then the remaining clubs shared the fate of the first.

"What would you do now?" asked the golfer of the caddie.

Holding out the empty bag, the youngster replied, "Don't give in! Hit it with this!"

INDIGESTION

Sensational Relief from Indigestion and One Dose Proves It

If the first dose of this present-acting little black tablet doesn't bring you the fastest and most complete relief you have experienced, send bottle back to us and get DOUBLE MONEY BACK. This makes the strong stomach fluids harmless and lets you eat the nourishing foods you need. For heartburn, sick headache and cramps as often caused by excess stomach fluids making you feel sour and sick all over—TRY ONE BOTTLE OF BEE-BAZ AND GET SURE relief. See everywhere.

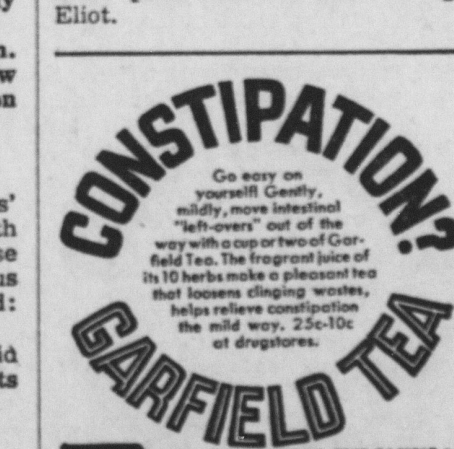
Spontaneous Humor

Humor is a thing one ought not to be conscious of—it ought to be just there, ready to brim over—it oughtn't to be cultivated.

NERVOUS, SLEEPLESS?

Frederick, Md.—Mrs. Bertha Staub, 422 N. Brent St., says: "A few years ago I was nervous, didn't sleep well at night, and housework was a burden to me. But Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription stimulated my appetite and helped to make me stronger, and my nerves seemed better." Buy Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription in liquid or tablets from your druggist today.

Reward for Efforts It never will rain roses; when we want to have more roses we must plant more trees.—George Eliot.



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